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lifestyle newsdigest



Hello Summer!

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now open
baking therapy
café

at Shangri-La Plaza Mall
Ortigas, Mandaluyong City





A Place to Gather

The historian Brian Cowan describes 17th century English coffeehouses as “places where people gathered to drink coffee, learn the news of the day, and perhaps to meet with other local residents and discuss matters of mutual concern.” The absence of alcohol created an atmosphere in which it was possible to engage in more serious conversation than in a pub.

What made coffeehouses special and a symbol of the *Age of Enlightenment* was the fact that the coffeehouse was not limited to a specific socio-economic or social class. They were open to everyone to participate in and become engaged in the conversation. The price of coffee, a penny, brought people together and facilitated conversation. People could come to coffeehouses and bring their diverse backgrounds and ideas with them to engage in debates.

Not much has changed since then except for the price of coffee! Five years after launching the first **Baking Therapy Café** at Uptown Mall, BGC in February 2019, I have come to realize that cafés (coffeehouses) are in fact, a miniature form of society.

The elegant beauty of a café lies in its customers. The eclectic mix of people that come and visit us every day, with their weird and wonderful characters and personalities, are each a minute expression of society. From the young upwardly mobile professionals, business owners and single parents, to yogis, mall shoppers, students and retired couples, all going about their business and each has their own unique and interesting life story.

Our second **Baking Therapy Café**, which opened last month in Shangri-La Mall, Ortigas, also aims to serve as a gathering place for social and business interactions. It provides our customers with a place to meet, talk, gossip, bond, debate, read, work, or pass the time, whether individually or in small groups. It can also be the perfect place for first dates! It's busy enough that awkward silences can be ignored, yet intimate enough to spend time getting to know one another and enjoy each other's company.

So, what can you find at **Baking Therapy Café**? Aside from our organic Sumatra coffee (has a robust earthy flavor yet less acidic taste) and antioxidant-rich matcha tea, you can indulge in artisanal French pastries, gluten-free baked goods, gluten-free cakes, and other dairy-free, sugar-free, vegan, and keto-friendly baked products. All freshly made daily (except cakes) with natural or organic ingredients from *Healthy Options*. My personal favorites are the super buttery croissants, chicken pocket pies, *pain au chocolat*, and sourdough *pandesal*. Soft-serve ice cream will soon be available too.

A visit to **Baking Therapy Café** is not only a nourishing experience, but it's good for the soul too — just like therapy! Go visit **BT Uptown** and **BT Shang** today. And coming soon near you: **BT Rockwell**, **BT Podium**, **BT Megamall**, **BT Greenbelt** and **BT Alabang Town Center**.

Have a great summer!
Romy Sia
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our vision

A healthier world where people enjoy longer, richer and more fulfilling lives by taking control of their health without costing the earth.

our mission

To educate, enlighten, and empower our customers to take control of their health and make the world a healthier and better place.

6 Scary Sunscreen Ingredients to Avoid

By Renee Loux



As the summer sun warms and waxes, protecting your skin from sunburn and UV damage should be a hot priority. While slathering your skin with the nearest SPF may seem like a keen idea, many sunscreens are loaded with some seriously questionable ingredients that can induce adverse effects on

your skin and body, (i.e., allergic reactions, hormone disruption, and premature aging), and might even increase your cancer risk. However, experts agree that the sun is still your greatest risk. Luckily, not all SPF products are harmful, and not all sunscreens are created equal.

There are two categories:

Physical sunscreen or sunblock, contains natural minerals such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide that cover the surface of skin to physically block or reflect broad spectrum of the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Unless you're using high-end physical SPF products, sunblock can be thick and messy to apply, sometimes leaving a white sheen and residue that can clog pores and require scrubbing and rubbing to remove.

Chemical sunscreen on the other hand, contains synthetic ingredients such as oxybenzone and octinoxate, which are absorbed into the skin to filter and absorb UV rays, effectively protecting deeper layers of skin. Because it is absorbed, chemical sunscreen can lead to skin irritation and other adverse reactions. Plus, the ingredients can generate cell-damaging free radicals when exposed to the sun.

To reap the benefits of sunscreen and sidestep the potential side effects, avoid these dubious ingredients before slathering up this summer:

6 Scary Sunscreen Ingredients

1. Oxybenzone. This penetration enhancer (i.e., chemical that helps other chemicals penetrate the skin) undergoes a chemical reaction when exposed to UV rays. When oxybenzone is absorbed by your skin, it can cause an eczema-like allergic reaction that can spread beyond the exposed area and last long after you're out of the sun. Experts also suspect that oxybenzone disrupts hormones (i.e., mimics, blocks, and alters hormone levels) which can throw off your endocrine system.

2. Octinoxate. One of the most common ingredients found in sunscreens with SPF, octinoxate is readily absorbed by our skin and helps other ingredients to be absorbed more readily. While allergic reactions from octinoxate aren't common, hormone disruption is: the chemical's effects on estrogen can be harmful for humans and wildlife, too, should they come into contact with the chemical once it gets into water. Though SPF products are designed to protect skin from sun-induced aging, octinoxate may actually be a culprit for premature aging, as it produces menacing free radicals that can damage skin and cells.

3. Paraben Preservatives. Associated with both acute and chronic side effects, parabens (butyl-, ethyl-, methyl-, and propyl-) can induce allergic reactions, hormone disruption, developmental and reproductive toxicity. While butylparaben was reported to be non-carcinogenic in rats and mice, it has been previously suspected that parabens and other chemicals in underarm cosmetics may contribute to the rising incidence of breast cancer.

4. Homosalate. This UV-absorbing sunscreen ingredient helps sunscreen to penetrate your skin. Once the ingredient has been absorbed, homosalate accumulates in our bodies faster than we can get rid of it, becomes toxic, and disrupts our hormones.

“Many sunscreens are loaded with some seriously questionable ingredients that can induce adverse effects on your skin and body.”

5. Octocrylene. When this chemical is exposed to UV light, it absorbs the rays and produces oxygen radicals that can damage cells and cause mutations. It is readily absorbed by your skin and may accumulate within your body in measurable amounts. Plus, it can be toxic to the environment.

6. Retinyl Palmitate. (Vitamin A Palmitate) Just like the vitamin A we eat, retinyl palmitate is an antioxidant. As an ingredient in sunscreen, its function is to improve the product's performance against the aging effects of UV exposure. However, certain forms of vitamin A found in sun protection products—namely retinyl palmitate, a combination of retinol (vitamin A) and palmitic acid, an ingredient found in tropical plants such as palm and coconut—can be cause for concern. When exposed to the sun's UV rays, retinol compounds break down and produce destructive free radicals that are toxic to cells, damage DNA, and may lead to cancer. In fact, FDA studies have shown that retinyl palmitate may speed the development of malignant cells and skin tumors when applied to skin before sun exposure, so steer clear of skin sun products that harbor the stuff. 🌿

source: womenshealthmag.com

Pool Safety for Kids and Parents

Medically reviewed by: Amy W. Anzilotti, MD



Having a pool, pond, spa, or hot tub on your property is a huge responsibility when it comes to safety. Drowning can happen in seconds to minutes, is often completely silent, and is a leading cause of death in children and teens.

Use these layers of protection to keep kids safe in and around water. You never know which one will save a life.

Assign a Water Watcher

There should always be an adult water watcher while children are in and around a pool or any body of water. The water watcher should be within an arm's length of young children and beginner swimmers. They should always keep their eyes on kids who are in the water, even older children who can swim.

The water watcher should not use a cellphone, socialize, drink alcohol, or do anything else that might be a distraction. At a party, have adults take turns as water watcher. Even if a lifeguard is on duty, a water watcher also should watch kids.

Use Fences/Alarms/Covers

All pools (including above-ground pools) and hot tubs should have a fence around them with a self-closing, locked gate. Add even more protection with door and window alarms that chime when opened to alert a parent that a child is going outside (you can find inexpensive, simple alarms online) and pool alarms that go off when someone enters the pool. If you can't fence around a spa or hot tub, be sure they are securely covered when you aren't using them.

Have Kids Take Swim Lessons

Schedule swimming lessons for kids when they're at least 1 year old. Swim lessons do not replace the need for a water watcher, but learning to swim makes drowning less likely. Check with your local recreation centers or search the Red Cross website for classes taught by a qualified instructor. Ask about free or reduced rate lessons. If you don't know how to swim, consider taking lessons too.

Learn CPR

Every parent should know how and when to do CPR. It brings blood to the heart, brain, and other organs and initiates breathing until health care providers can give the person advanced life support. Done correctly, CPR can save a person's life.

Make Sure Everyone Follows the Pool Rules

Teach your kids and all caregivers these pool rules:

- Do not run around the pool.
- Get out of the pool right away in bad weather, especially if there's lightning.
- Never dive from the side of the pool or a diving board unless a pool is at least 9 feet deep. If the depth isn't posted, don't dive!
- No pushing or dunking in the pool.

Also:

- Do not let kids use mermaid tails or fins in the pool. They can make it hard to swim and lead to drowning.
- Floaties do not prevent drowning. Kids who wear them still need the same supervision as those without them.
- Set a good example on how to use a pool safely. Follow all safety rules and don't use alcohol or drugs while in or around a pool. 🚫

source: kidshealth.org

The Gluten-Free Diet: A Beginner's Guide

By Ryan Raman, MS, RD and Rachael Ajmera, MS, RD



The protein gluten is found in items like wheat products, beer, and pasta. It may cause digestive symptoms in some people, including those with celiac disease.

A gluten-free diet involves excluding foods that contain the protein gluten like wheat and rye products. Most studies on gluten-free diets have involved people with celiac disease. However, gluten in the diet can affect other health conditions like non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS).

Wheat allergy occurs when your body creates antibodies to wheat proteins causing a potentially serious anaphylactic reaction. It's important to see a health professional who's experienced with gastrointestinal issues to help reach the correct diagnosis.

What is gluten?

Gluten is a family of proteins found in wheat, barley, rye, and spelt. Its name comes from the Latin word for glue. It gives flour a sticky consistency when it's mixed with water.

This glue-like property helps gluten create a sticky network that gives bread the ability to rise when baked. It also gives bread a chewy and satisfying texture. Some people have uncomfortable gastrointestinal symptoms after eating foods that contain gluten. Severe reactions can occur in people diagnosed with celiac disease.

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder in which the body mistakenly attacks itself after exposure to gluten. Celiac disease affects at least 1% of the population in the Western world and can damage the intestines.

If eating gluten makes you feel uncomfortable, a doctor may recommend screening for celiac disease.

Why some people should avoid gluten

Most people can eat gluten without experiencing any side effects, but people with celiac disease cannot tolerate it.

People with other disorders like non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS) and wheat allergy frequently avoid gluten too.

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Celiac disease

In celiac disease, the body mistakes gluten for a foreign threat. To remove this perceived threat, the body overreacts and attacks the gluten proteins.

This attack also damages surrounding areas, like the gut wall. Not only can this lead to nutrient deficiencies and severe digestive issues, but it can also increase the risk of many harmful diseases.

People with celiac disease often experience symptoms such as:

- bloating
- diarrhea or constipation
- sharp stomach pain
- skin rashes
- stomach discomfort
- weight loss

Interestingly, some people with celiac disease do not experience digestive symptoms. Instead, they may experience other symptoms like:

- anemia
- depression
- fatigue

These symptoms are common in many other medical conditions, making celiac disease difficult to diagnose.

Non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS)

NCGS is believed to affect around 0.6%–13% of people. People diagnosed as having NCGS do not test positive for celiac disease or wheat allergy, but they still feel uncomfortable after eating gluten. Symptoms of NCGS are similar to those of celiac disease.

NCGS can be complicated to identify because there are currently no specific lab or tissue tests to diagnose it conclusively.

There have been a few very small studies where people who did not have celiac disease or wheat allergy were given gluten-free or gluten-containing test foods. The participants did not know which test foods they were eating.

When asked to describe symptoms after each challenge, most of the participants were unable to correctly identify gluten-containing test foods. Researchers point out that other triggers besides gluten may be involved.

Gluten ataxia

Similar to celiac disease, gluten ataxia is an autoimmune disorder. This disorder causes the body's immune system to attack the nervous system in response to gluten ingestion. This can cause a range of neurological symptoms. In particular, gluten ataxia can cause balance, coordination, and motor control issues.

According to one review, gluten ataxia typically affects individuals over age 50 years and accounts for approximately 15% of all

ataxia diagnoses. Ataxias are a group of disorders that affect balance and coordination.

A gluten-free diet is recommended to help reduce symptoms of gluten ataxia and prevent further damage to the nervous system.

Wheat allergies

Wheat allergy is a type of allergic reaction that occurs in response to one or more wheat proteins.

It can cause symptoms like:

- difficulty breathing
- headache
- hives
- nasal congestion
- swelling or irritation of the mouth or throat

In severe cases, it can also cause anaphylaxis, an allergic reaction that can be life threatening.

Wheat allergy is most common in children, but approximately 65% of children with wheat allergy outgrow it by the age of 12.

Though people with wheat allergy do not necessarily need to avoid gluten specifically, they may need to avoid certain gluten-containing foods. This includes wheat products like bread, pasta, and baked goods.

What to avoid

Completely avoiding gluten can be challenging, as it's found in many common ingredients that are added to foods and beverages.

Wheat is the main source of gluten in the diet. Wheat-based products include:

- durum
- kamut
- semolina
- spelt
- wheat bran
- wheat flour

Other gluten sources include:

- barley
- brewer's yeast
- malt
- rye
- triticale, a hybrid crop that combines wheat and rye

Many gluten-free products are now widely available, but it is important to read the ingredient section of the food label on most of the foods you buy.

Labels may include additional statements like "processed in a facility that also processes wheat-based foods." Oats are naturally gluten-free but may be processed with other wheat-containing foods, contaminating them.

What to eat and drink

Gluten-free diets can be expensive and may lack important nutrients if not properly planned. There are plenty of gluten-free options that will allow you to enjoy healthy and delicious meals. It can be very helpful to work with a registered dietitian to make sure you are meeting all your nutritional needs.

The following items are naturally gluten-free:

- Beverages: most beverages, except for beer (unless it's labeled gluten-free)
- Dairy: unflavored dairy products, including plain milk, yogurt, and cheese
- Eggs: whole eggs, egg whites, egg yolks
- Fruits: berries, melons, pineapples, bananas, oranges, pears, peaches, etc.
- Grains: quinoa, rice, buckwheat, tapioca, sorghum, corn, millet, amaranth, arrowroot, teff, oats (if they're labeled gluten-free)
- Herbs and spices: black pepper, turmeric, oregano, thyme, rosemary, parsley, cilantro, etc.
- Meat, fish, and poultry: all types, except battered or coated meats
- Nuts and seeds: almonds, walnuts, pistachios, cashews, hemp seeds, chia seeds, flaxseeds, etc.
- Spreads and oils: vegetable oils, olive oil, coconut oil, butter, margarine, etc.
- Starches and flours: potato flour, cornstarch, corn flour, chickpea flour, soy flour, almond meal or flour, coconut flour, tapioca flour
- Vegetables: broccoli, tomatoes, onions, peppers, mushrooms, asparagus, carrots, potatoes, etc.

If you're ever unsure if an item contains gluten, it's best to read the nutrition label carefully. 🌱

source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

The Positive Health Effects of Eating Red Meat

By Hidaya Aliouche, B.Sc. Reviewed by Emily Henderson, B.Sc.



Meat provides protein as well as several micronutrients such as iron, and B complex vitamins. There are typically more negative health effects associated with eating meat. However, moderate consumption in well-varied and complete diets is associated with positive health outcomes.

Overall, red meat contains quality protein and essential nutrients that support a healthful diet. Moreover, the contribution of red meat towards saturated fat intake is viewed as misunderstood, and there is evidence to support the inclusion of lean red meat in diets for cardiovascular health.

Red meat as a source of essential nutrients

Dietary iron is found in two forms: heme and nonheme iron. The heme content of red meat is 10-fold greater compared to white meat such as chicken. Hemoglobin and myoglobin iron is most abundant in the ferric form of iron; this has the strongest oxidative properties but is better absorbed than non-heme iron present in plant-derived foods. Heme iron is associated with cognitive development and functioning in children and young adults.

Meat-derived, alongside animal-derived foods, such as dairy products and fish, are the sole natural sources of vitamin B12. In individuals who exclude such foods, these foods from their diet are at risk of inadequate intake. Alongside B12, dietary iron is predominantly found and has the greatest bioavailability in animal products.

Red meat provides 91% of the recommended daily intake (RDI) of vitamin B12 from the recommended daily intake of a cooked serving of 85g. Vitamin B12 reduces the risk of developing megaloblastic anemia and its deficiency is associated with irreversible neurologic disease.

Red meat also contains zinc (45–62% (males–females)) which is important in cell growth and replication, the production of bone, and fortification of the immune system. This serving also provides 52% for selenium, 21% for phosphorous, 31–36% for niacin, 31% for vitamin B6, 27–12% for iron, and 13–15% for riboflavin. As such, red meat represents a major source of essential vitamins and minerals.

The satiating effects of meat

Lean red meat is widely considered a pragmatic component of diets designed for weight loss as it has a high satiating effect. This is attributed to the satiating property of protein and the effect of protein on thermogenesis, body composition, and decrease in energy efficiency.

The controversial association of red meat intake and cancer

The World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research Project stated that there was convincing evidence of a causal relationship between red meat and processed meat consumption and colorectal cancer, which has caused controversy. While established, the association may be a result of confounding alternate explanations or bias. Despite this, the association between meat intake and cancer risk has been comprehensively studied and conclusively linked.

While consumption of red meat is related to an increase in saturated fatty acids (SFAs) consumption, there are some benefits to a controlled intake of red meat. When ingested in limited quantities, health benefits can be gained; lean red meat is also considered to be a high-quality source of protein and essential nutrients.

Red meat and cardiovascular health

Studies have shown that there is an inconsistent association between SFAs and heart disease. Moreover, the methods that evaluate evidence and the reliance on types of evidence have been called into question.

“High protein, low-fat diets, when compared with standard protein, low-fat diets result in a more favorable change in weight loss and fat mass over short-term periods.”

When considered as a whole, studies reflect that red meat is not a unique contributor to total SFA intake and it is more likely that other dietary risk factors play a more significant role. The relationship between SFAs and heart disease depends on what it is being compared to. While replacing SFAs with Monounsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFAs) and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) is beneficial, increasing intake of other dietary components such as refined carbohydrates may increase risk.

In studies of low-fat diets optimized for healthy hearts, lean red meat has been shown to lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol to the same degree as white meat. With regards to other cardiovascular effects, randomized clinical trial evidence has supported that red meat, not beef specifically, results in hypertensive effects, and may even improve blood pressure and vascular reactivity.

Protein and healthy body weight and body composition

The amino acids that form the proteins in meat are considered to be essential building blocks; they are essential during growth and development early in life as well as throughout life in the repair and maintenance of tissue. Red meat is an efficient source of protein with 50% of the daily value for protein derived from 85g of cooked serving (8% of total calorie intake).

High-quality protein has been shown, in an expanding area of research, to promote weight loss and or prevent weight gain or regain in adults. In addition, it has been shown to reduce fat mass and protect against losses in lean body mass.



The protein content of meat extends further than the prevention of protein deficiency. While the recommended macronutrient intake as a percentage of total energy intake, is between 10–35% of energy for protein in adults, higher intake is associated with greater health outcomes. This includes reducing the risk for chronic diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis.

The association of lean red meat intake and weight loss

With regards to diets designed for weight loss, diets that incorporate higher amounts of protein are more effective compared to standard protein, higher carbohydrate diets. Approximately 1.2-1.6g of protein/kg body mass/day (for females and males respectively) is essential for weight management.

Higher protein diets with increased meat consumption are also associated with greater overall satisfaction and or motivation compared to low protein diets. Due to this, the inclusion of lean red meat as a means to increase protein intake is therefore expected to increase compliance in these higher-protein diets.

Increased protein intake may lead to weight loss through several mechanisms. One key factor is improvement in appetite control which may consequently reduce food consumption. Dietary protein has a greater satiety index compared to carbohydrate or fat. Protein

is also associated with increases in thermogenesis; this alters substrate oxidation, and may, in turn, influence appetite signals that control food intake.

Red meat and vitality

Aging adults, who often suffer from sarcopenia (degenerative loss of skeletal muscle mass) and the replacement of lost skeletal muscle with fat (sarcopenic obesity), benefit from the ingestion of high-quality protein and bioavailable iron derived from red meat.

Protein is associated with the increase of fat-free mass as a result of stimulating muscle protein anabolism. Branched-chain amino acids which include leucine, isoleucine, and valine are essential for protein synthesis.

Branched-chain amino acids are higher in animal proteins compared to plant proteins, with the highest concentration found in red meat. Studies have shown that soy protein has a reduced ability to stimulate protein synthesis both at rest and after post-resistant exercise compared to whey protein isolates in elderly men.

Moreover, resistance training combined with lean red meat consumption in elderly women has been shown to increase total lean body tissue mass, lean leg tissue mass, and muscle strength as compared to a controlled diet combined with similar resistance training. 🌱



Discover Sustainable Seafood



Healthy Options' salmon has the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification which assures consumers that it conforms to the world's leading standard for responsibly farmed fish and seafood.

Salmon is considered the healthiest fish to eat because it is high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids that provide benefits for the heart and brain.

More sustainable seafood available at [healthyOptions](#)

Probiotics: The Friendly Bacteria

By Kris Gunnars, BSc



The bacteria in your body are said to outnumber your body's cells at a 10-to-1 ratio. However, a recent study says that the ratio is closer to 1-to-1. According to these estimates, you have 39–300 trillion bacteria living inside you. Whichever estimate is most accurate, it's certainly a large number.

Much of these bacteria reside in your gut, and the majority are quite harmless. Some are helpful, and a small number can cause disease.

Having the right gut bacteria has been linked to numerous health benefits, including the following:

- enhanced immune function
- healthier skin
- improved digestion
- reduced risk of some diseases
- weight loss

Probiotics, which are a certain type of friendly bacteria, provide health benefits when eaten.

They're often taken as supplements that are supposed to help colonize your gut with good microorganisms.

What are probiotics?

Probiotics are living microorganisms that, when ingested, provide a health benefit. However, the scientific community often disagrees on what the benefits are, as well as which strains of bacteria are responsible.

Probiotics are usually bacteria, but certain types of yeasts can also function as probiotics. There are also other microorganisms in the gut that are being studied, including viruses, fungi, archaea, and helminths.

You can get probiotics from supplements, as well as from foods prepared by bacterial fermentation.

Probiotic foods include yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, tempeh, and kimchi. Probiotics should not be confused with prebiotics, which are carbs — often dietary fibers — that help feed the friendly bacteria already in your gut.

Products that contain both prebiotics and probiotics are referred to as synbiotics. Synbiotic products usually combine friendly bacteria along with some food for the bacteria to eat (the prebiotics), all in one supplement.

The most common probiotic bacteria are Lactobacillus and Bifidobacteria. Other common kinds are Saccharomyces, Streptococcus, Enterococcus, Escherichia, and Bacillus.

Each genus comprises different species, and each species has many strains. On labels, you'll see probiotics identified by their specific strain, the species, subspecies if there is one, and a letter-number strain code.

Different probiotics have been found to address different health conditions. Therefore, choosing the right type — or types — of probiotics is essential. Some supplements, known as broad-spectrum probiotics or multi-probiotics, combine different species in the same product.

Importance of microorganisms for your gut

The complex community of microorganisms in your gut is called the gut flora, gut microbiota, or gut microbiome.

The gut microbiota includes bacteria, viruses, fungi, archaea, and helminths — with bacteria comprising the vast majority. Your gut is home to a complex eco-system of 300–500 bacterial species.

Most of the gut flora is found in your colon, or large intestine, which is the last part of your digestive tract. Surprisingly, the metabolic activities of your gut flora resemble those of an organ. For this reason, some scientists refer to the gut flora as the “forgotten organ”.

Your gut flora performs many important health functions. It manufactures vitamins, including vitamin K and some of the B vitamins. It also turns fibers into short-chain fats like butyrate, propionate, and acetate, which feed your gut wall and perform many metabolic functions.

These fats also stimulate your immune system and strengthen your gut wall. This can help prevent unwanted substances from entering your body and provoking an immune response.

Your gut flora is highly sensitive to your diet, and studies show that an unbalanced gut flora is linked to numerous diseases. These diseases are thought to include obesity, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, colorectal cancer, Alzheimer's, and depression.

Probiotics and prebiotic fibers can help correct this balance, ensuring that your “forgotten organ” is functioning optimally.

“Having the right gut bacteria has been linked to numerous health benefits.”

Impact on digestive health

Probiotics are widely researched for their effects on digestive health. Evidence suggests that probiotic supplements can help cure antibiotic-associated diarrhea.

When people take antibiotics, especially for long periods of time, they often experience diarrhea — even long after the infection has been eradicated. This is because the antibiotics kill many of the natural bacteria in your gut, which shifts the gut balance and allows harmful bacteria to thrive.

Probiotics may also help combat irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a common digestive disorder, reducing gas, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, and other symptoms.

Research regarding the effectiveness of probiotics supplementation for the treatment of IBS is mixed. A recent review reported that seven of the studies indicated IBS improvement with probiotic supplementation, but four did not.

Research indicates that multi-strain probiotic supplements seem to bring most IBS improvement, especially when taken for longer than 8 weeks.

Some studies also note benefits of probiotic supplementation against inflammatory bowel diseases, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Again, researchers say further research is needed before the treatment is confirmed to be effective.

Impact on weight loss

Some research indicates that people with obesity have different gut bacteria than those who are lean. Research shows a connection between gut microbes and obesity in both infants and adults. It also shows that microbial changes in the gut are a factor in developing obesity as an adult.

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Therefore, many scientists believe that your gut bacteria are important in determining body weight. While more research is needed, some probiotic strains appear to aid weight loss.

Other health benefits

There are many other benefits of probiotics. They may help with the following conditions:

- **Anti-aging:** Though research is extremely limited, there's evidence that probiotics have the potential to extend lifespan by increasing the ability of cells to replicate themselves.
- **Blood cholesterol:** Several probiotics have been shown to lower total and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, although the research remains controversial.
- **Blood pressure:** Probiotics may also cause modest reductions in blood pressure.
- **Depression and anxiety:** The probiotic strains *Lactobacillus helveticus* and *Bifidobacterium longum* have been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in people with clinical depression.

- **Immune function:** Several probiotic strains may enhance immune function, possibly leading to a reduced risk of infections, including those that cause the common cold.
- **Inflammation:** Probiotics reduce systemic inflammation, a leading driver of many diseases.
- **Skin health:** There's some evidence that probiotics can be useful for acne, rosacea, and eczema, as well as other skin disorders.

This is only a small slice of probiotics' benefits, as ongoing studies indicate a wide breadth of potential health effects.

Summary

In addition to their potential effects on weight loss, digestion, and neurological disorders, probiotics may improve heart health, immune function, and symptoms of depression and anxiety. 🌱

source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

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7 Most Hydrating Fruits

By Christina Manian, RDN



Hydration may not be the most exciting topic or fun habit in the world, but it sure is important—and it only gets more important when the weather heats up in the summer. Our bodies are made up of at least 60% water, which our cells use to communicate with each other, deliver oxygen more effectively, and absorb nutrients.

Water also works to lubricate joints, rid toxins from the body, regulate temperature, and protect the spine, skin, eyes, and nose. It even promotes digestion, as well as kidney, liver, and gut microbiome health.

Throughout the day, normal bodily functions, like sweating, going to the bathroom, and even breathing, naturally result in water loss. Ultimately, proper hydration boils down to consuming more fluids than you're losing every day. But did you know that the food you eat, and not just the water you drink, also contributes to your overall hydration levels and helps prevent dehydration?

Hydration can look (and taste) much more appealing than a boring old glass of H₂O thanks to a variety of healthy, high-water-content fruits and veggies. Serendipitously, while summer does require us to up our hydration game, it also provides an abundance of seasonal, delicious, and hydrating produce options—especially fruit. Learn all about the most thirst-quenching fruits to snack on for a healthy boost of hydration—and why it matters for your health.

Hydrating Fruits With High Water Content

Two, one-cup servings of the highest-water-containing fruits can be equivalent to up to eight ounces of water. Let's jump into some of the most hydrating fruits available to get you well on your way to hydrating deliciously.

1. Watermelon



The name—and telltale juiciness—of this fruit gives it away. Beyond being loaded with immune-boosting vitamin C and plant compounds, refreshing pink watermelon is often considered to be one of the most hydrating fruits, containing up to 91% water. While there's nothing quite like enjoying a wedge of watermelon on a hot day, if

you're looking for a new way to eat this summer favorite, it pairs perfectly in savory salads and other unexpected dishes (mint and feta complement it especially well).

2. Strawberries (and All Berries!)



Almost every type of berry will offer you high amounts of fiber, thanks to their prominent skins and seeds. They also give you a leg up on daily hydration goals, too. Strawberries are the most hydrating berry with up to 91% water content, followed closely by blackberries at 88%. Raspberries also make the list at 86% water as do blueberries at 84%.

Cranberries get an honorable mention here as well as they tend to contain lots of water, too.

3. Citrus Fruits, Especially Grapefruits and Oranges



It's no coincidence citrus fruits are commonly juiced—they offer so much hydrating water from their sweet-tart interiors. Grapefruit is a high-water citrus fruit with up to 91% total water content, and oranges contain 87% water. Enjoy alongside your morning oatmeal, as a bright afternoon snack, or as the star in your favorite salad or dessert.

4. Cantaloupe



It's tough to beat a perfectly ripe cantaloupe in the summer months, and it so happens to be conveniently seasonal and packed with water during the most dehydrating months of the year. Cantaloupe melon is 90% water, in fact! Beyond playing a starring role in many a fruit salad, cantaloupe pairs

beautifully with savory ingredients like prosciutto, arugula, and mozzarella cheese—a classic, Italian-inspired appetizer to snack on year-round.

5. Pineapple



With up to 86% total water content, pineapples deserve a spot on the list. Beyond their hydrating capacity, pineapples are loaded with vitamin C, with one cup offering over 100% of your daily needs, helping you to maintain a healthy immune system. Pineapple is also uniquely healthy in that it's full of

bromelain, an enzyme that aids in the digestion and absorption of protein. But the benefits of this enzyme don't stop there as it can also help to reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation.

6. Pears



There's so much to love about the humble pear — fiber, vitamin C, folate, copper, and potassium. These nutrients help our bodies to optimally digest, repair, and develop. Unsurprisingly, these hand fruits are also super great sources of water. The Asian pear is the highest water-containing variety of pear at 88%. Though not as

popular as your everyday anjou or bartlett, Asian pears' irresistible crunch make them extra-satisfying. It's also not overly sweet, lending it nicely to savory dishes like slaws, marinades, flatbreads, and even soups.

7. Mango



This tropical go-to will help you meet your daily fluid goals with its high water content of 83%. Like many of its fellow hydrating fruits, mangoes are high in vitamin C, as well as vitamins A and B6 to promote immune, eye, and brain health. 🥭

Wheezing Cough: What You Need to Know

By Sara Lindberg. Medically reviewed by Alana Biggers, M.D., MPH



A wheezing cough is typically triggered by a viral infection, asthma, allergies, and in some cases, more severe medical complications.

Even though a wheezing cough can affect people of all ages, it can be particularly alarming when it happens to an infant. That's why it's important to learn the causes, symptoms, and treatments for a wheezing cough in both adults and babies.

What are the causes of a wheezing cough in adults?

A wheezing cough in adults can be caused by a wide range of ailments. According to the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, some of the more common causes include the following conditions:

Viral or bacterial infections

Viral or bacterial infections like bronchitis that produce an ongoing cough with mucus, shortness of breath, chest pain, or a low fever can lead to a wheezing cough. Also, the common cold, which is a viral infection, can cause wheezing if it settles in the chest.

Pneumonia, which can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi, causes inflammation in the air sacs in your lungs. This makes it difficult to breathe, and symptoms can include a wheezing or phlegmy cough, along with fever, sweating or chills, chest pain, and fatigue.

Asthma

Asthma symptoms can cause the lining of your airways to swell and narrow, and the muscles in your airways to tighten. The airways then get filled with mucus, which makes it even harder for air to get into your lungs.

These conditions can bring on an asthma flare-up or attack. Symptoms include:

- coughing
- wheezing when breathing
- shortness of breath
- tightness in the chest
- fatigue

COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, often referred to as COPD, is an umbrella term for several progressive lung diseases. The most common are emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Many people with COPD have both conditions.

Emphysema is a lung condition that occurs most often in people who smoke. It slowly weakens and destroys the air sacs in your lungs. This makes it harder for the sacs to absorb oxygen. As a result, less oxygen is able to get into the bloodstream. Symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, and extreme fatigue.

Chronic bronchitis is caused by damage to the bronchial tubes, in particular the hair-like fibers called cilia. Without cilia, it can be hard to cough up mucus, which causes more coughing. This irritates the tubes and causes them to swell. This can make it hard to breathe, and can also result in a wheezing cough.

GERD

With gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), stomach acid backs up into your esophagus. It's also called acid regurgitation or acid reflux.

GERD affects about 20 percent of people in the United States. Symptoms include heartburn, chest pain, wheezing, and shortness of breath. If not treated, the irritation from these symptoms can lead to a chronic cough.

Allergies

Allergies to pollen, dust mites, mold, pet dander, or certain foods can result in a wheezing cough.

While rare, some people may experience anaphylaxis, which is a serious, life threatening medical emergency that requires immediate attention. Reactions occur almost immediately after being exposed to an allergen with symptoms that include:

- a swollen throat
- chest tightness
- hives
- nausea
- rash
- vomiting
- wheezing

Heart disease

Some types of heart disease can cause fluid to build up in the lungs. This, in turn, may lead to persistent coughing and wheezing with white or pink, blood-tinged mucus.

Home remedies for a wheezing cough

There are several home remedies you can try to help manage the symptoms of a wheezing cough if it's not too severe.

But before you proceed, make sure your doctor has given you the thumbs up to treat your wheezing cough at home. These home remedies aren't meant to replace medical treatment, but they may be helpful to use with medications or treatments your doctor has prescribed.

Steam

When you inhale moist air or steam, you may notice that it's easier to breathe. This may also help reduce the severity of your cough.

There are several ways to use steam for a wheezing cough. You can:

- Fill a bowl with hot water, put a towel over your head, and lean over the bowl so you can inhale the moist air.
- Sit in the bathroom while the shower is running. This is the best way to use steam for an infant.
- Take a hot shower with the door closed and the fan off.

Humidifier

A humidifier works by releasing steam or water vapor into the air to increase humidity. Breathing air that's got more moisture in it can help loosen mucus and relieve congestion.

Using a humidifier is appropriate for both adults and babies. Consider running a small humidifier at night while you or your child are sleeping.

Drink warm liquids

Hot tea, warm water with a teaspoon of honey, or other warm liquids can help loosen mucus and relax the airway. Hot tea isn't appropriate for infants.

Breathing exercises

For adults with bronchial asthma, deep breathing exercises, similar to those done in yoga, may be especially helpful.

A 2009 study found that people with bronchial asthma, who did breathing exercises for 20 minutes twice daily for 12 weeks, had fewer symptoms and better lung function than those who didn't do the breathing exercises.

Avoid allergens

If you know that your wheezing cough is brought on by an allergic reaction to something in the environment, take steps to reduce or avoid contact with whatever may trigger your allergy.

Some of the most common environmental allergens include pollen, dust mites, mold, pet dander, insect stings, and latex. Common food allergens include milk, wheat, eggs, nuts, fish and shellfish, and soybeans. You may also want to avoid cigarette smoke since it can make a wheezing cough worse.

Other remedies

- Try some honey. For adults or children over 1 year of age, a teaspoon of honey may be more effective at soothing a cough than some cough medications. Don't give honey to a child younger than a year old due to the risk of botulism.
- Consider an over-the-counter cough medication. It's important not to use these medications in children under 6 years old, as they can cause dangerous side effects.
- Suck on cough drops or hard candy. Lemon, honey, or menthol-flavored cough drops may help soothe irritated airways. Avoid giving these to young children, as they're a choking hazard.

Summary

A wheezing cough is often a symptom of a mild illness or manageable medical condition. However, it's important to pay attention to the severity, duration, and other symptoms that accompany the cough, especially with babies and young children.

If you or your child or infant has a wheezing cough accompanied by breathing that's rapid, irregular or labored, a high fever, bluish skin, or chest tightness, be sure to get immediate medical care.

Also seek immediate attention if you think the wheezing cough may be due to anaphylaxis, which is a serious, life threatening condition. In this situation, reactions occur very quickly after being exposed to an allergen.

Besides wheezing or coughing, other symptoms include trouble breathing, a rash or hives, a swollen tongue or throat, chest tightness, nausea, or vomiting. 🌿

FAQ on Antibiotic Use

By Sara Lindberg. Medically reviewed by Alana Biggers, M.D., MPH



What is an antibiotic?

Antibiotics are medicines that fight infections caused by bacteria in humans and animals by either killing the bacteria or making it difficult for the bacteria to grow and multiply.

Bacteria are germs. They live in the environment and all over the inside and outside of our bodies. Most bacteria are harmless and even helpful to people, but some can cause infections, like strep throat.

What DO antibiotics treat?

Antibiotics ONLY treat certain infections caused by bacteria, such as:

- Strep throat
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Whooping cough

Antibiotics are also needed to treat life-threatening conditions caused by bacteria, such as sepsis, which is the body's extreme response to infection.

What DON'T antibiotics treat?

Antibiotics DO NOT work on viruses such as those that cause:

- Colds and runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow, or green
- Flu
- Most cases of chest colds (bronchitis)
- Most sore throats (except strep throat)

Antibiotics also ARE NOT needed for some common bacterial infections including:

- Many sinus infections
- Some ear infections

This is because these illnesses will usually get better on their own, without antibiotics. Taking antibiotics when they're not needed won't help you, and their side effects can still cause harm.

Viruses are germs different from bacteria. They cause infections such as colds and flu. However, antibiotics do not treat infections caused by viruses.

What are the side effects of antibiotics?

Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. Common side effects range from minor to very severe health problems and can include:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Rash
- Yeast infections

Call your doctor if you develop any side effects while taking your antibiotic.

Why is it important to take antibiotics only when they're needed?

Antibiotics are important to treat infections and have saved countless lives. However, anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects and contribute to antibiotic resistance, one of the most urgent threats to the public's health.

When antibiotics are needed, the benefits usually outweigh the risks of side effects or antibiotic resistance. However, too many antibiotics are prescribed unnecessarily and are misused, which threatens the usefulness of these important drugs.

This is why it's important that we all use antibiotics ONLY when we need them. This protects us from harm caused by unnecessary antibiotic use and to combat antibiotic resistance.

What is unnecessary antibiotic use?

Unnecessary antibiotic use happens when a person is prescribed antibiotics when they're not needed, such as for colds and flu.

It also happens when a person is prescribed antibiotics for infections that are sometimes caused by bacteria that do not always need antibiotics, like many sinus infections and some ear infections.

Antibiotics aren't always the answer when you're sick. Talk with your doctor about the best treatment for your illness. 🌱

source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

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